collapse. However, there has been a slow down in the steel industry in the recent past. The performance of the small steel plants and re-rolling mills has been affected due to various reasons including inadequate availability of power, increase in input costs, uneconomic production capacity, outdated technology and other problems related to labour, finance and management etc.

TISCO has not incurred any losses in the first 6 months of the current year. However, in the first half of the current year SAIL has incurred a loss of about Rs. 617 crores.

(b) and (c) Government is aware of the present slow down in the steel industry. The details of the steps taken by the Government and some of the results achieved to enable the steel industry to overcome the present problems are as under:—

(i) Too boost the demand and consumption of steel, the Development Commissioner for Iron & Steel (DCI&S) has launched a National Campaign.

(ii) Recently, the import duty on several inputs such as coking coal (ash content< 12%), non-coking coal, metallurgical coke, ferro nickel, charge nickel and nickel oxide sinters, low silica limestone and graphite electrodes (> 28") has been reduced.

(iii) Strengthening of anti dumpting mechanism was strongly recommended. An Anti dumping duty on Hot Rolled coils imported from Ukraine and Russia has recently been notified by the Designated Authority in the Ministry of Commerce.

(iv) Rationalisation of Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) rates for steel exports have been carried out to boost exports.

(v) A Steel Exporters' Forum has been set up to help steel exporters overcome bottlenecks in exports.

(vi) Enahanced project financing to steel sector by All Indian Financial Institutions and relaxation of ECB norm has been strongly recommended.

**Heavy Losses by the VSP**

888. SHRI N.R. DASARI:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Visakhapatnam Steel Plant incurred heavy losses due to delay in starting the production;

(b) if so, the total amount of losses incurred so far; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken for the revival of the plant?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The total amount of loss incurred by RINL (VSP) upto 31.3.98 is Rs. 3596.65 crores.

(c) As per directions of the Govt., the company engaged an internationally reputed consultant to study the turnaround strategies and prepare a comprehensive revival plan for long term viability of the company. The consultants have since submitted their report. And a comprehensive proposal for the revival of the Plant is under consideration.

**देश में इस्पात की कमी**

889. श्री दिलीप सिंह जूदेव:
श्री गोपाल सिंह जी० सोलंकी:

क्या इस्पात और खान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या देश में वास्तव में इस्पात की अत्यधिक कमी है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है और इसके कारण क्या है;